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from child *soldier* to singer for *peace*

An interview with Emmanuel Jal

photo © Jiaro Criollo

Emmanuel Jal could easily have become an embittered young man. Instead, he transcended the scars of his early life to inspire millions through his music. Born in Sudan, he was a young child when the Second Sudanese Civil War broke out. His father joined the Sudan People's Liberation Army and his mother was killed by soldiers loyal to the government. Emmanuel joined the throng of children lured to Ethiopia with the promise of education only to be recruited into military training camps where they learned to kill: "I didn't have a life as a child. In five years as a fighting boy, what was in my heart was to kill as many Muslims as possible."

Emmanuel's life changed when Emma McCune, a British aid worker, adopted him and smuggled him into Kenya where he attended school. Sadly, McCune died a few months later. It was at school that Emmanuel discovered singing helped him overcome the pain of his experiences. He got active in the community, raising money for local street children and refugees. Now, at 31, Emmanuel has achieved huge success with his unique music and as an activist for peace and ending child hunger, he is an inspiration. Last year, he raised $220,000 for improving and extending primary school facilities in southern Sudan. He is also the founder of GUA Africa, a charity that helps communities overcome the effects of war and poverty. www.gua-africa.org and www.emmanueljal.com

Joseph Roberts: What first turned you on to the power of music?

Emmanuel Jal: The biggest experience I ever had was when I was performing at Live 8 at The Eden Project where I was introduced by Peter Gabriel. That day, I felt like I was floating in air. Before I went to the stage, my feet were shaking. It was like I was going to the battlefield. My throat was dry. You know, I had different experiences. It's like before you go to fight in a battle your body reacts differently. The adrenalin is released and you're not sure, but after you trigger the bullet you're engaged in the battle and you can just continue. That day, once I held the mic and started the first song, the crowd went wild and I was floating. I even forgot my words; I started freestyling. But it was a great experience because the crowd was amazing.

JR: I've been playing music for many years and it heals my soul. Have you found music to be a source of personal healing?

EJ: Music is the only place I've found therapy. It's the only thing that speaks to your mind, your heart, your soul, your spirit, your cell system. It influences you without you even knowing. So the place that I find to get to see heaven is music. Depending on what I'm listening to, I can dance for a while and forget about my problems. But when I'm engaged, singing to people and seeing their reaction, then I'm dancing and going wild and I become a child. That's what music is. So music is the biggest therapy to me. It kept me busy – rather than going to see a psychiatrist or someone who can help me with my problems.

JR: Which musicians have influenced you?

EJ: Tupak, John Lennon, Bob Marley, Alicia Keyes.

JR: You've said your dad was a policeman and that you didn't understand the politics.

EJ: That was my song *Warchild* where I'm telling my story about losing my father and mother in a bat-

tle and I talk about the politics. It's a deep song. It's one of the first songs where I could personally tell my story. That was the beginning of poetry to tell my story. Before, I was hiding.

JR: Were you about 11-years-old when you became a soldier?

EJ: No, I was trained when I was eight. I left home when I was seven.

JR: You were forced to do what you were told to do?

EJ: You see, my home just got turned at that time. I just witnessed people getting killed. I saw someone next to me get shot when I was five-years-old. Seeing my mother trying to put their intestine back inside. I got used to seeing dead people as a child. Bones, fire, the Savannah grass and forests burning. And we would run from one place to another.

My mother was claimed by war. All my ancestors died in the war. So we were told we were going to go to school in Ethiopia, but that's also where we got trained to be soldiers.

JR: Now that you are older, what do you feel is the cause of war?

EJ: It's basically economics. You know, you go to the basics. The root of every war is economics. When I study, I don't find religion – that's not part of it. There's no racism. If everybody has enough to eat and they aren't worried about the future, there'll be no war. In my village, when there was not enough food to eat, the elders came with an ideology saying that we're the only real human beings and any other tribe is irrelevant. So they would invade other tribes and take their cows. The other tribes have their own theory. They say we're not human beings, that we're a sub-human species so they come in with the idea to invade our home and take our cattle.

Over the years, when the Arabs came home they invaded our home and brought their religion, calling us

Blessing is a force that pushes somebody towards their destiny. A curse is a force that is pulling somebody away from their destiny.

to obey them, that we're slaves and not human beings. But if you look, in reality, what they're looking for is the land – our cows, our fertile land, everything we have and manpower to work to boost their economy, selling people as slaves. Only prosperity for the few people who want to have more and more and more.

If you look at the Second World War, it was economics. In the scramble for Africa by the Europeans, it was the economics – people looking for raw materials, resources to boost their country so they could go ahead. And when economics is mixed with politics, it becomes a disaster. So religion can be used as an ideology to collect a group of people to extend their empathy, first to the people of the same colour or language and the same faith as them. So they unite together and say, "Look, those people are not believers; let's rob them."

The root cause of all the major conflicts that dissolve into long-term war is economics. Like now, there's going to be a scramble for resources in the Arctic. The ice is going to melt. The Russians have put their flag below sea level. All the European countries, the Canadians, the Chinese, want to claim that part because they just discovered the largest oil reserve in the world below the sea.

Now, because resources are very scarce, everybody's running there. The wars in Iraq and Africa are all about resources to boost the economy. So economics is – it's my economy or the economy within the country. That's what I think the root cause is.

JR: And greed.

EJ: Yes, and a greedy person cannot do a deal with an honest person. A greedy person in Europe and a greedy person in Africa cannot make a deal because their work is to rob people. If you look at the bands, their economy collapsed. The bands are still getting big bonuses. There is war. It's the children of the poor that are going to fight. Poor whites, poor Africans, it's the poor everywhere that are going to fight. The second group of people are just benefitting.

So we're all in it together, whether you're a European or an African. All of humanity needs to unite. But not to point fingers at the people, but to walk with them to raise their emotional intelligence so they could share what they have in the world. People like Warren Buffett, who decided to put some of his money into education and peace, y'know, philanthropy. If we can get the corporations to be socially active – social responsibility – and get the CEOs and the people working there to develop emotional intelligence and caution about the environment, our world is going to be into the future. It's going to look better.

Because the biggest destructors are the corporations. Our governments have become puppets to the corporations.

JR: The problem is hundreds, maybe thousands, of years of lies. How can we find peace?

Music can destroy you or make you, depending on how you do it. Money can do the same.

EJ: Peace is possible. One thing we have to look at is that crime has reduced. The year 1700 was more violent than now. In the 1940s it was more violent than now. The 1980s were more violent than now. With education and the passing of information, human rights abuses are actually decreasing because the public is aware. Look at China; it has begun to open up slowly to the people. They're beginning to bend their rules. They're beginning to allow investment. They're beginning to allow people to go to their country.

Now, for human beings, with technology and information being passed around, there is hope. If you look at the civil rights movement, that's the best gift they've ever given to humanity. Now we're living in the time of Martin Luther King's reign. We have people like William Wilberforce who abandoned slavery.

So we live in the best times in which there's a dialogue between humans. Chinese people can speak English. The Japanese can come to America and set up a business. So there is hope. We can count our blessings. The future looks bright *if* we start up that fire again now, so we don't close our eyes. People care about Darfur. In 1945, who cared about the people in Darfur? You see. People were concerned about Sudan.

Emma McCune, a British aid worker, adopted me and put me in school. We have a lot of good individuals who are doing things out there if we can reach out to the people. It's the people's power, not the governments. The governments depend on the people. The corporations also depend on the people.

JR: The biggest trick is to make people believe they have no power. People give their power away.

EJ: To every person, power comes. One email can affect the lives of a thousand people, instantly. A person who thinks they're not powerful – they have an impact of one thousand people. They can reach one thousand people within one month by a *continued p.10...*

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The 'Big O'

Osteoporosis screening – the fast track to dubious drugs

The 'Osteoporosis Game' works in five simple steps: 1) Be fearful. 2) Take a test. 3) Get a diagnosis. 4) Take drugs. 5) Potentially ruin your life by taking the drugs.

Be fearful

According to an executive of a large Manhattan PR firm, almost no one had ever heard of osteoporosis 20 years ago. In interviewing this woman for a radio documentary I put together on the making of a disease, she described her research from consumer focus groups that attempted to find out what people knew about the so-called 'Silent Killer.' Known as osteoporosis, this disease is caused by porous bones and it seemed like the unwashed masses didn't know much about it. She advised her clients – a coalition of pharmaceutical makers, medical device companies and patient groups – that they needed to do some serious "awareness-raising." After all, how were you going to sell a drug for a disease that people didn't know or fear?

Her firm, one of the largest PR firms in the world and a world leader in bringing various diseases out of closets, reconfigured osteoporosis from a rare disease, which only struck old ladies who were close to death, to something anyone of any age could get. And behind it all was pharmaceutical giant Merck, a key player in the remake of osteoporosis. In 1995, Merck launched Fosamax, the first of a revolutionary new class of drugs called bisphosphonates, designed to treat this disease.

After people became aware of the disease, however, there was a problem. Doctors needed to test for it because without a test and a diagnosis, there would be no Fosamax market. That meant the PR people not only had to convince the population there was this silent killer stalking middle-aged (and younger) women, but they also needed governments to pay for the test and doctors to perform it. It helped that the makers of the bisphosphonates bought and distributed thousands of bone density tests to clinics everywhere, thus creating an enormously successful disease by selling the test.

Let me be clear that hip fractures are a public health problem. According to the Osteoporosis Society of Canada, "… at least two million Canadians are affected by osteoporosis" and "… one in four women and many men over the age of 50 have osteoporosis." Sounds dire, but how do we really know if it is true?

Take a test

That's easy. If you are able to define a disease broadly enough, you can capture as much of the population as you want. With many early researchers funded by drug makers and a key meeting of World Health Organization in 1995, drug company executives were at the table defining who had this disease. As it turned out, the definition of the disease was so broad it meant 50 percent of post-menopausal women – or about 44 million American women – had it.

The message that flows from popular medical press strongly suggests even the healthiest people should be worried about falling and breaking a hip due to the weakening of their bones. This worry then causes them to get their bone density 'tested' as the best way to thwart an early demise. After all, isn't being proactive about your body the healthy thing to do?

Now, wouldn't it be nice if those of us who are found to have weakened bones could just take a drug, avoid becoming a hip fracture statistic – about 30,000 hip fractures happen in Canada every year – and live our lives better? The question is this: "Is submitting to a bone density test the right thing to do?"

Get a diagnosis

You have to remember screening healthy people is only justified on a population-wide level if the test is safe, accurate and inexpensive and if the results

would actually make a difference in a person's subsequent treatment. So how does bone mineral density (BMD) testing merit on these considerations?

For starters, the thinning of bones happens to many people naturally as they age, much like grey hair or wrinkles. The difference, of course, is that grey hair or wrinkles can't really hurt you, whereas osteoporosis might.

If you consult independent experts around the world – those not selling mass bone screening programs or marketing osteoporosis drugs – they will tell you a pretty similar story: BMD testing is often inaccurate, can't predict with any validity who will go on to break a bone and applies a label that leads to inappropriate drug therapy. Further, the test directs funds away from measures that could actually significantly reduce the rate of hip fractures, such as promoting weight-bearing exercise, quitting smoking, limiting alcohol and the intake of sleeping pills and increasing access to Vitamin D and calcium.

The research shows about 60 percent of women who have hip fractures have *normal* bone density. Knowing this, the question changes from "How do I prevent porous bones" to "How do I prevent myself from falling and breaking a hip"? But since the focus is on your bone density, the solution looks a lot like a drug.

Take drugs

You may be offered a drug like alendronate (Fosamax), ibandronate (Boniva) or risedronate (Actonel), all of which are promoted and prescribed on the basis of their ability to reduce hip and other kinds of fractures. One thing all of these drugs have in common is the misleading statistics and exaggeration employed to convince your doctor to prescribe them. An example from the mid-90's, which turned on a light bulb for me, were the ads in medical journals promoting Fosamax, stating the drug could "reduce the rate of hip fractures by 50 percent."

That sounds pretty good, but if women with defined osteoporosis and at high risk of a hip fracture are followed for four years, only two percent of them will actually have a hip fracture. If they took the drug instead of the placebo, it would be one percent. This difference is expressed as a whopping 50 percent relative reduction – one is 50 percent of two – but the absolute difference is one percent, meaning 100 women would have to take this drug for four years to prevent one hip fracture. This study, published in 1996 in the medical journal, *The Lancet*, showed the drug reduced the risk of "… any clinical fracture" from about 18 percent to 13.5 percent and absolute risk reduction of 4.5 percent. About one in 20 women would benefit from the drug.

Potentially ruin your life

If the drugs are only marginally effective, how safe are they? Sadly, the safety of the bisphosphonates, despite the denials of the manufacturers, only grows worse with time.

In the hullabaloo over what to do about osteoporosis, we seem to forget the thinning of our bones happens naturally with age. The density of your bones is about as relevant to whether you fall and break a hip as the greyness of your hair or the number of wrinkles you have.

In the first full year on the market, Fosamax, which comes with strict recommendations about how to take it due to its corrosiveness to the throat, was the top drug on the list of Suspect Drugs in 1996 as part of the US's Postmarket Adverse Drug Experience (ADE) reporting system, where over 6,000 adverse drug reports were made. This class of drug can cause throat or chest pain, difficulty swallowing and heartburn. About 10 percent of patients have some kind of irritation of the esophagus. The more serious stuff includes abnormal heart *continued p.35…*

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...***Emmanuel*** *from pg. 7*

story. Who doesn't have a way to publicize themselves? You see the people power. The people in the Middle East said, "Look, we need a change. We don't want to be lied to and kept prisoners. We want our women to drive and to go to school. We want our children to go to school. You know? We don't want much. We just want to be free to speak our minds." The greatest thing I like about the west is you can get out there and say, "I don't like so and so and I don't like what they're doing." You get away with it. In the Middle East, you open your mouth, you die.

There is freedom of speech in Africa, but you are not free after you speak. People are fed up that they've been put down for hundreds of years into submission so there's a people's revolution. That's why a normal person in America or Canada or Australia does not care if someone is a Muslim or an unbeliever, but they care that that is their right. So the people's revolution is what is taking the wave there.

In Egypt, you see the people's power without firing any guns. In Libya, they messed it up big. They should have just kept themselves as a people without firing. Once you're demanding something from someone more powerful than you, when you fight back with weapons, you're giving them an opportunity to oppress you more. But when you fight back peacefully you're giving them an opportunity to think. You're hitting their conscious level. Because they're killing you. You're beginning to act like Gandhi. And they're beginning to think, "Oh wait, we're killing them but they're just saying, 'No, we want this' and we're killing them." So they'll begin to negotiate because you're not a threat to them. All you want is to be free. You're not demanding them to go away, you're just saying, "Look, this is what I want and you can take my life and I'm not going to fight you."

That's what the Egyptians and the Tunisians did. They went to the streets, "Shoot me. Tomorrow we're coming back, but we're not going to fire on you; we're not going to fight back." And they won. People have so much power. We are powerful when we come together and speak our voice, like the walls of Jericho in the Bible. People sang songs around the wall and it fell down. So we could sing together the same song until the walls fall down and release the money and save the world! We're hopeful. We can't say there's no hope. We will win in the end.

The first thing you need to do as a human being is to forgive yourself. You need to love yourself. How do you love yourself? You empower your mind and heart and your own body, leading a positive life and being thankful for what you have. A person with a constant giving heart will live a healthy life, because there's joy and power in giving. When you forgive, you become powerful. You're elevated to a different form as a human being and you actually live a healthy life.

So choose your battles. What battle do you want to fight? A healthy battle is when somebody's hungry, you give them something to eat; you go home healthy. It actually releases your stress. If somebody steps on your toe, if you fight back it's going to make even more harm, but if you let it go you're letting all the stress and negativity go. Taking care of yourself as a human being is very important. Looking at yourself - you can do sport, any exercise, you can pray. You know, releasing the stress. The reason there's so much joy in Africa is because most of the time you're not on the tube, you're not driving, you're not on computer. You walk. There's a park. You're running. There's so much you're getting just by being out and smiling and playing. So a lot of physical stress can be released. Meditation, even taking a normal walk for one hour - as you look around your body exercises, your heart, your system. So our physical body can heal just by doing things. Loving yourself doesn't mean just eating all this stuff. Avoiding what you eat too because certain foods can give you stress. So giving is the main important thing. It keeps your heart healthy.

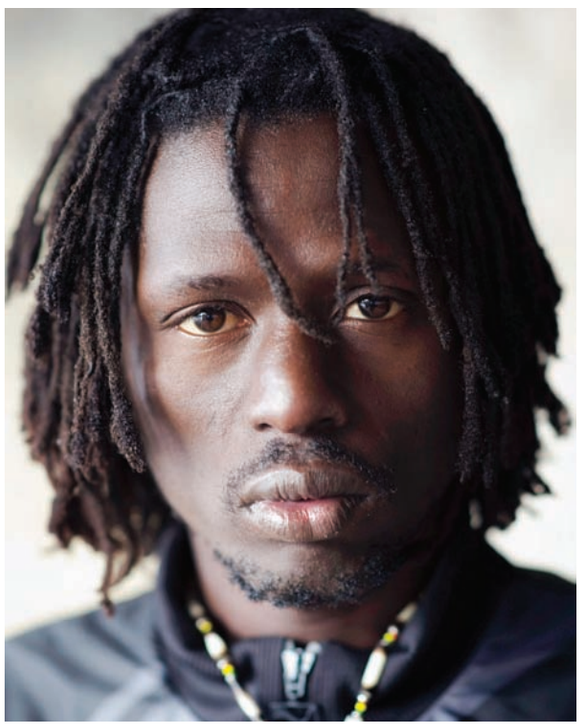


photo © Geoff Pugh

I mean, I don't know, but I'm speaking what I've experienced. I hated Muslims and Arabs and I wanted to kill as many as possible. But when I forgave, something happened. I changed. I became a different human being. I'm happy. My body cannot accept to be upset for more than two hours now. So my body works against being mad. In two years, my system learned how to be against being upset. You upset me, step on my toe, steal my money or didn't pay me – the next day I will be able to smile. You are responsible for your own happiness. You are responsible every time you wake up in the morning. You don't expect somebody to make you smile. Whoever makes you smile has just added to your happiness. If they crack a joke or do a comedy for you or give you a gift, they're just adding.

I always just ask people, "What do you want to be?" Blessing is a force that pushes somebody towards their destiny. A curse is a force that is pulling somebody away from their destiny. So what do you want to be as a human being? If you're fortunate – every human being that is fortunate on this earth has a greater responsibility and a bigger accountability to make this world a better place because you have the resources to do so. That's what I would say. Every human being here is responsible to make this world a better place.

Everybody needs to play a part. A poor person, a middle-class person, a rich person. We as human beings are in crisis now and the biggest battle that we have to fight to win is education. Educating young people. Empowering those who are fortunate enough. Empowering their minds, empowering them emotionally that they have a great responsibility for this planet. Giving them tools to better themselves. The biggest battle we need to win peace is education.

It works in the west. When the west was educated the wars reduced. It's easy to manipulate somebody who's not educated. That's why we have so many terrorists in the East. They don't understand that not all Europeans think like those who come and invade. Education is the biggest fight we have to win as humanity.

JR: We have to educate the heart.

EJ: That's emotional intelligence. Social-emotional learning.

JR: A lot of musicians start turning to alcohol and drugs when they become famous. How can you take care of your own sense of well being? There are a lot of kids in Vancouver addicted to drugs and who are very messed up.

EJ: Music can destroy you or make you, depending on how you do it. Money can do the same. Anybody with no vision and who don't know their purpose for why they're on this earth is going to get lost. A lot of musicians are disturbed human beings. You're giving out so much that you go home empty. That's when you begin to take alcohol and drugs. You're feeling the parts that are missing. That's why a lot of them are into drugs.

Look at somebody like George Clooney. He's no drunkard. He's one of the highest paid artists. He's focused. He knows what he's doing. He knows his purpose. He knows he can use his power to save lives and better humanity. Look at Alicia Keys, one of the biggest selling R & B artists. She's able to use her talent and keep herself. When you're a musician, you're a modern day prophet. You're an emotional leader. You have a greater responsibility. So a lot of them get lost in society. Those who've got vision survive. If you look at Black-Eyed Peas, they're focused. They're entertaining and doing good stuff for humanity. There are good musicians out there. Kids on drugs need to understand if you don't have a purpose you'll get lost.

I'm actually going to tour 200 schools worldwide and I'm going to do 50 in Canada. Probably I can do 10 in Vancouver. In September, the tour begins in Toronto.

Emmanual Jal performs on the main stage at the Vancouver Folk Music Festival Sunday July 17, and offers workshops during the weekend. The Festival runs July 15-17. See www.thefestival.bc.ca for times. Call 604-602-9798 for tickets or drop into the box office at 411 Dunsmuir Street in Vancouver.

The Compassionate Diet

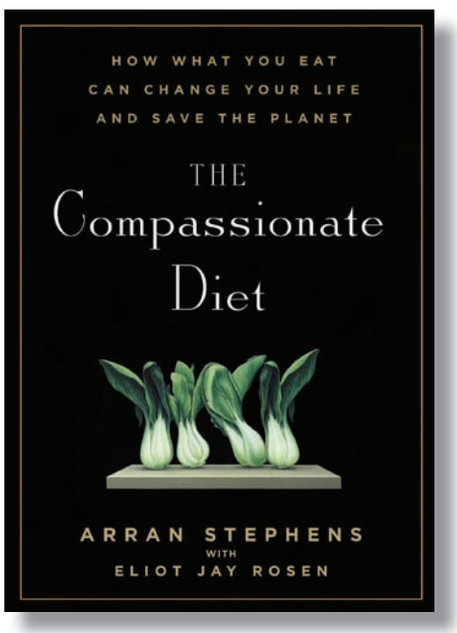
How What You Eat Can Change Your Life and Save the Planet

What we eat is of such importance to human progress and health, ecological balance and animal welfare that food, like politics and religion, has become a highly charged and controversial issue. While diet is important, it is equally so not to injure the feelings and beliefs of others. Mutual respect is therefore highly valued and necessary, while holding fast to one's ideals.

Over the millennia of recorded history, and to this present day, philosophers, scientists, ethicists, sages and seers have weighed in on the issue of vegetarianism. Research has brought to light many startling and eloquent testimonies that join with numerous recent scientific studies to build an extraordinarily strong case. The vegetarian way of life is truly a diet for all reasons.

Millions worldwide make the change to a vegetarian diet to improve their health. Fruits, vegetables, grains, beans, nuts, seeds, seaweeds and other plant foods contain vital elements not found in animal flesh. The health risks associated with animal foods are now indisputable. There is a direct correlation between the amount of animal foods consumed and the incidence of degenerative disease.

The destruction of ancient rain forests, loss of topsoil, massive increases in water impurities, and copious amounts of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas pollution result from the raising of animals for food. Vegetarianism is kinder to the earth and offers hope for saving the 60 million people who die of starvation each year – 15 million of them children. If the grain used to fatten livestock were fed to humans, starvation could be completely averted, not to speak of the folly of growing corn to fuel cars.



In factory farm settings, billions of animals are killed for food each year in the United States alone. We recommend watching *The Meatrix*, an animated film posted at www.themeatrix.com, for an entertaining but serious look at factory farms.

Vegetarianism, like ethical living in general, is foundational to spiritual growth and the development of universal consciousness and love. According to many of the world's wisdom traditions, meat eating is antithetical to achieving these states of expanded awareness.

In some of these ancient spiritual traditions, vegetarianism is unequivocally advocated, yet it is a sad fact that many modern-day exponents either have forgotten or deny the original teachings. Examples are the utterances of Siddhartha Gautama – the Buddha –that were written down in the Pali language by his direct disciples; several Judeo-Christian texts, written in Aramaic, that were excluded from what became the King James Version of the Christian Bible; various esoteric Taoist teachings; and the writings and living guidance of spiritually realized human beings variously called masters, saints, prophets and sages. Many diverse traditions caution that our full human/divine potential cannot be realized if we indulge in animal foods.

Sparing life through dietary choice is an act of compassion by and for the individual person, as well as for mammals, birds, fish and other animals used for food; in actuality, it is having compassion for one's own self! Many teachers and traditions indicate that the eating of animal foods carries heavy karmic penalties. It may be every soul's ultimate urge to reunite with its Source, but according to many great spiritual traditions, meat eating delays the process.

A well-balanced vegetarian diet is also conducive to the practice of meditation. If the body is the temple of God, pure vegetarian food, obtained honestly and eaten in moderation, helps maintain excellent health while improving one's powers of concentration. Concentration is crucial not just for meditation, but for success in any endeavour, whether spiritual, academic, scientific, artistic or professional.

Arran Stephens founded Nature's Path Foods, North America's largest organic breakfast foods company. He has received Ernst & Young's Entrepreneur of the Year and Canadian Health Food Association's Hall of Fame awards and has been named among "Canada's Best 100 Employers." He lives in Vancouver, BC. **Eliot Jay Rosen** is a health writer, clinical psychotherapist and author of the Los Angeles Times bestseller, **Experiencing the Soul**. He lives in Hawaii.

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Ayahuasca and human destiny

Dennis and Terence gazing into the abyss circa 1957

Dennis McKenna is an American ethnopharmacologist and author. His research led to new frontiers of the inner-space; one of the most experienced psychonauts on the planet. His new book, The Brotherhood of the Screaming Abyss! *tells the story of his brother Terence McKenna:*

"Terence McKenna is a legend in the psychedelic community: He is remembered as a radical philosopher, futurist, raconteur, and cultural commentator. He was and is one of the most articulate spokesmen for the post-psychedelic zeitgeist. He is one of the prime originators of the 2012 mythos with all its attendent apocalyptarian anxiety. I am the younger brother of Terence McKenna. I want to write a memoir telling the real story of our intertwined life together over the last 60 years, and of the ideas, adventures and explorations (both inner and outer) that we shared. I am Terence's only brother; I am the only one who can tell this tale, from this unique perspective. Terence died in 2000, but his ideas live on the Net and in his books (e.g. ***True Hallucinations***, ***Food of the Gods***, ***The Archaic Revival***, ***The Invisible Landscape*** *and others). The time has come to tell his story. In reality, it is our story." For more information about Dennis and his upcoming book, see www.kickstarter.com/projects/1862402066/the-brotherhood-of-the-screaming-abyss*

Dennis McKenna

On a personal level, ayahuasca has been for me both a scientific and professional continuing carrot, and a plant teacher and guide of incomparable wisdom, compassion and intelligence. My earliest encounters with ayahuasca were experiential; only later did it become an object of scientific curiosity, sparked in part by a desire to understand the mechanism, the machineries, that might underlie the profound experiences that it elicited.

As a young man just getting started in the field of ethnopharmacology, ayahuasca seemed to me more than worthy of a lifetime of scientific study and so it has proven to be. Pursuing an understanding of ayahuasca has led to many exotic places that I would never have visited otherwise, from the jungles of the Amazon Basin to the laboratory complexes of the National Institute of Mental Health and Stanford; it has led to the formation of warm friendships and fruitful collaborations with many colleagues who have shared my curiosity about the mysteries of this curious plant complex. These collaborations, and more importantly, these friendships, continue, as does the quest for understanding. Though there have been detours along the way, always, and inevitably, they have led back to the central quest. Often, after the fact, I have seen how those apparent detours were not so far off the path after all, as they supplied some insight, some skill, or some experience, that in hindsight proved necessary to the furtherance of the quest.

Just as ayahuasca has been for me personally something of a Holy Grail, as it has been for many others, I have the intuition that it may have a similar role with respect to our entire species. Anyone who is personally experienced with ayahuasca is aware that it has much to teach us. There is incredible wisdom and intelligence there. And to my mind, one of the most profound and humbling lessons that ayahuasca teaches – one that we thick-headed humans have the hardest time grasping – is the realization that you monkeys only *think* you're running things.

Though I state it humorously, it is nonetheless a profound insight on which may depend the very survival of our species and our planet. Humans are good at nothing if not hubris, arrogance and self-delusion. We assume that we dominate nature, that we are somehow separate from, and superior to, nature, even as we set about busily undermining and wrecking the very homeostatic global mechanisms that have kept our earth stable and hospitable to life for the last four and a half billion years. We devastate the rainforests of the world; we are responsible for the greatest loss of habitat and the greatest decimation of species since the asteroid impacts of the Permian-Triassic boundary, 250 million years ago. We rip the guts out of the earth and burn them, spewing toxic chemicals into the atmosphere. At the same time, we slash and burn the woody forests that may be the only hope for sequestration of the carbon dioxide that is rapidly building to dangerous and possibly uncontrollable levels. For the first time in the history of our species, and indeed of our planet, we are forced to confront the possibility that thoughtless and unsustainable human activity may be posing a real threat to our species' survival, and possibly the survival of all life on the planet.

Dennis in Portland

And suddenly, and literally, "out of the Amazon," one of the most impacted parts of our wounded planet, ayahuasca emerges as an emissary of trans-species sentience, to bring this lesson: you monkeys only *think* you're running things. In a wider sense, the import of this lesson is that we need to wake up to what is happening to us and to the planet. We need to get with the program, people. We have become spiritually bereft and have been seduced by the delusion that we are somehow important in the scheme of things. We are not. Our spiritual institutions have devolved into hollow shells, perverted to the agendas of rapacious governments and fanatic fundamentalisms, no longer capable of providing balm to the wounded spirit of our species; and as the world goes up in flames we benumb ourselves with consumerism and mindless entertainment, the decadent distractions of gadgets and gewgaws, the frantic but ultimately meaningless pursuits of a civilization that has lost its compass. And at this cusp in human history, there emerges a gentle emissary, the conduit to a body of profoundly ancient genetic and evolutionary wisdom that has long abided in the cosmologies of the indigenous peoples of the Amazon who have guarded and protected this knowledge for millennia, who learned long ago that the human role is not to be the master of nature, but its stewards. Our destiny, if we are to survive, is to nurture nature and to learn from it how to nurture ourselves and our fellow beings. This is the lesson that we can learn from ayahuasca, if only we pay attention.

For millennia, ayahuasca was known only to indigenous peoples who have long since understood and integrated what it has to teach us.

I find it both ironic, and hopeful, that within the last 150 years, and particularly in the last half of the 20th century, ayahuasca has begun to assert its presence into human awareness on a global scale. For millennia, it was known only to indigenous peoples who have long since

understood and integrated what it has to teach us. In the 19th century it first came to the attention of a wider world as an object of curiosity in the reports of Richard Spruce and other intrepid explorers of the primordial rainforests of South America. In the mid-20th century, Schultes and others continued to explore this discovery and began to focus the lens of science on the specifics of its botany, chemistry and pharmacology (and, while necessary, this narrow scrutiny perhaps overlooked some of the larger implications of this ancient symbiosis with humanity).

At the same time, ayahuasca escaped from its indigenous habitat and made its influence felt among certain non-indigenous people, representatives of "greater" civilization. To these few men and women, ayahuasca provided revelations and they in turn responded (in the way that humans so often do when confronted with a profound mystery) by founding religious sects with a messianic mission – in this case, a mission of hope, a message to the rest of the world that despite its simplicity was far ahead of its time: that we must learn to become the stewards of nature, and by fostering, encouraging and sustaining the fecundity and diversity of nature, by celebrating and honouring our place as biological beings, as part of the web of life, we may learn to become nurturers of each other. A message quite different, and quite anathema, to the anti-biological obsessions of most of the major world "religions" with their preoccupation with death and suffering and their insistence on the suppression of all spontaneity and joy.

Terence McKenna

Such a message is perceived as a great threat by entrenched religious and political power structures, and indeed it is. It is a threat to the continued rape of nature and oppression of peoples that is the foundation of their power. Evidence that they understand this threat and take it seriously is reflected by the unstinting and brutal efforts that "civilized" ecclesiastical, judicial and political authorities have made to prohibit, demonize, and exterminate the shamanic use of ayahuasca and other sacred plants ever since the Inquisition and even earlier.

Our destiny, if we are to survive, is to nurture nature and to learn from it how to nurture ourselves and our fellow beings. This is the lesson that we can learn from ayahuasca, if only we pay attention.

But the story is not yet over. Within the last 30 years, ayahuasca, clever little plant intelligence that it is, has escaped from its ancestral home in the Amazon and has found haven in other parts of the world. With the assistance of human helpers who heard the message and heeded it, ayahuasca sent its tendrils forth to encircle the world. It has found new homes and new friends in nearly every part of the world where temperatures are warm and where the ancient connections to plant-spirit still thrive, from the islands of Hawaii to the rainforests of South Africa, from gardens in Florida to greenhouses in Japan. The forces of death and dominance have been outwitted; it has escaped them, outrun them. There is now no way that ayahuasca can ever be eliminated from the earth, short of toxifying the entire planet (which, unfortunately, the death culture is working assiduously to accomplish). Even if the Amazon itself is levelled for cattle pasture or burned for charcoal, ayahuasca, at least, will survive, and will continue to engage in its dialogue with humanity. And encouragingly, more and more people are listening.

It may be too late. I have no illusions about this. Given that the curtain is now being rung down on the drunken misadventure that we call human history, the death culture will inevitably become even more brutal and insane, flailing ever more violently as it sinks beneath the quick sands of time. Indeed, it is already happening; all you have to do is turn on the nightly news. Will ayahuasca survive? I have no doubt that ayahuasca will survive on this planet as long as the planet remains able to sustain life. The human time frame is measured in years, sometimes centuries, rarely, in millennia. Mere blinks when measured against the evolutionary time scales of planetary life, the scale on which ayahuasca wields its influence. It will be here long after the governments, religions and political power structures that seem today so permanent and so menacing have dissolved into dust. It will be here long after our ephemeral species has been reduced to anomalous sediment in the fossil record.

The real question is will *we* be here long enough to hear its message, to integrate what it is trying to tell us and to change in response, before it is too late? Ayahuasca has the same message for us now that it has always had, since the beginning of its symbiotic relationship with humanity. Are we willing to listen? Only time will tell.

Spirit Plant Medicine Conference 2011: Dennis McKenna gives a keynote talk. Sat. June 18 (AM) and also participates on a panel entitled "Natural Pharmacopeia" with Gabor Mate, Kenneth Tupper and Jonathan Dickinson. He also gives a talk on Sunday. See www.spiritplantmedicine.com for times and to register for the conference.

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Tribal teachings restore food independence

There is much to be learned from Elders and previous generations who share the wisdom of ways to overcome the stress and uncertainty associated with not knowing where your next meal is coming from. Secwepemc (aka Shuswap) Elder speaks of her experiences in the Great Depression years: "We (the Secwepemc) were not hungry because we knew how to grow, gather, hunt and fish to put food on the table and we knew how to work together as a community to make it happen. It was only the people who lacked the knowledge and skills necessary to feed themselves by living on the land that went hungry."

The ability to put healthy, culturally appropriate food on the table for ourselves, our families and our communities is being rapidly eroded by changes happening outside the historical range of variability. Some major changes to our environment and culture include climate chaos, lack of inter-generational transmission of food-related knowledge and lack of access to land. We owe it to our children and seven generations into the future to do our best to ensure we pass on the knowledge, skills, wisdom and values necessary for overcoming the stress and uncertainty associated with our reliance on the globalized food system.

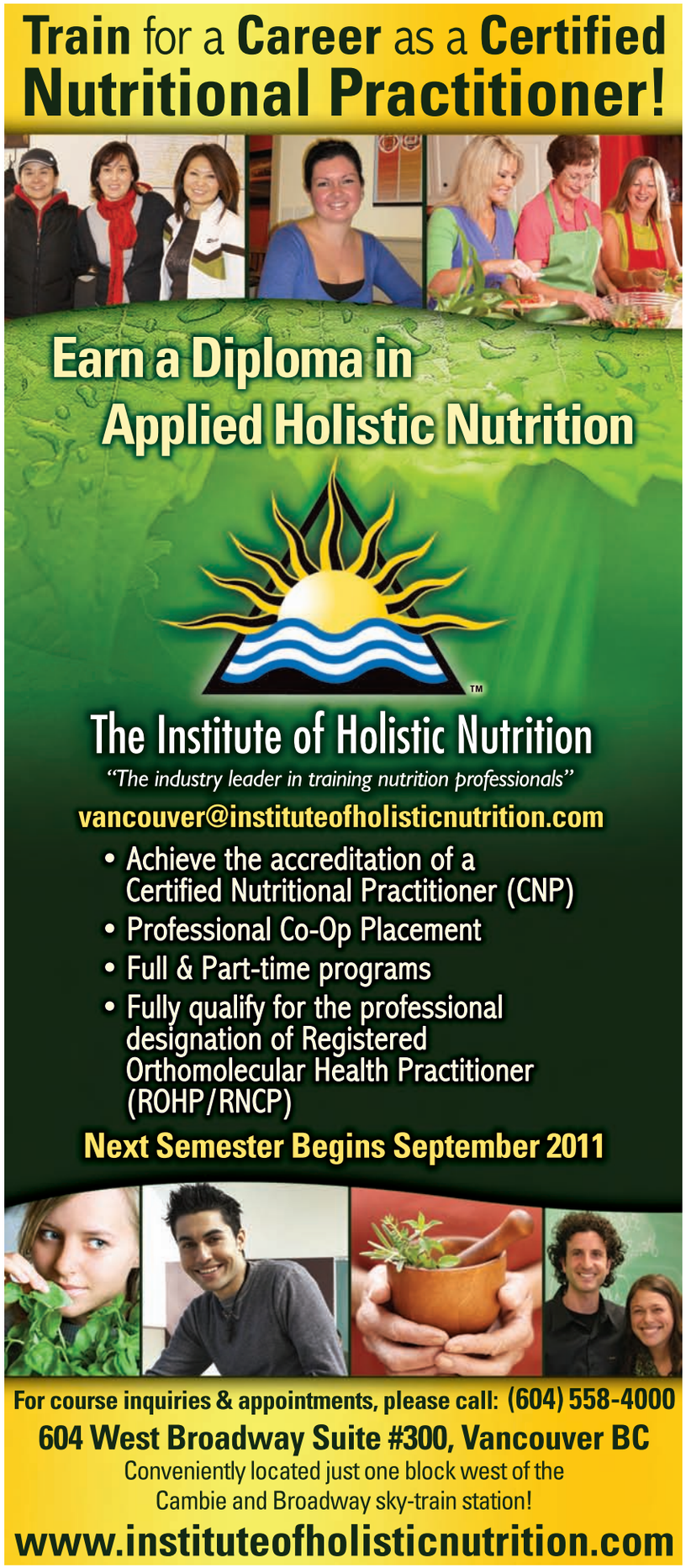
As social creatures capable of functioning with a high level of intelligence, love, and creativity, humans respond well to tribal teachings that place us back in the circle of life in close connection to one another and the land, plants and animals that provide us with our food. To many of the most persistent Elders and cultural teachers, social networking is just another fancy term that speaks to the ancient tribal values of being in relationship with our extended families and communities. As our most basic and profound physical need, food provides the perfect framework for linking social networks and re-focusing time and energy on sharing knowledge, insights and experiences.

The BC Food Systems Network plays an active role in bringing people together to advocate for a food policy that places community food security as the highest priority. The Network emphasizes the way in which food issues cross cultures, sectors and age groups. (www.fooddemocracy.org/about.php) The all-inclusive approach to building relationships across cultures has resulted in a richness of cross-cultural learning between early settler communities, new immigrants and the 27 nations of Indigenous peoples that inhabit what is now known as the province of BC.

BCFSN 13th Annual Gathering

The 13th annual Gathering of the BC Food Systems Network takes place July 7-10, in 100 Mile House in the Cariboo region of BC. In the spirit of resiliency, diversity, giving and sharing, the history of the venue carries stories of a "standing policy in the depression years to feed anyone who needed a meal if they were willing to do some of the work in exchange." The Gathering offers workshops, panel presentations, roundtable discussions, poster displays, demonstration tables and hands-on activities. The forum and the gathering are relevant to anyone who eats and/or is concerned about the future of food.

Special Public Forum $25. Gathering $295. Call or email Dawn Morrison for more info: gathering@bcfsn.org, 250.679.1116 or register online at www.fooddemocracy.org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Yummy food needs *good* policy

In the midst of the federal election campaign, a radical citizen-led plan to address some of our most pressing health, hunger, climate and agricultural-related issues was launched. The plan, called the People's Food Policy (PFP), is all about food. The sweeping proposals come from communities across the country and call for an overhaul of federal policies governing all aspects of food: where it comes from, how it is produced and how all Canadians can have access to safe, nutritious food at all times.

The People's Food Policy Project set out two years ago to identify policies needed to support Canadians as they work to create a food system "based on care and respect for humans and the natural world," where food is viewed as a primary foundation for healthy lives, communities, economies and eco-systems. This goal contrasts sharply with our current industrial system, which has built a complex, centralized infrastructure to treat food as a market commodity. Through the People's Food Policy, we now have a suite of policy proposals that, if implemented, would connect food, health, agriculture, the environment and social justice. The plan details the specific policies that we need to support the food system we want.

Policy for the people, by the people

"Policy-making is not just for politicians. Everyone who eats should have a say in the future of food," states the PFP and this is why the proposals were built from the participation of thousands of people from across the country. Direct input and widespread involvement were the cornerstone of the PFP because "the government needs to institute a national food policy that is driven by the people." The PFP says this strong citizen participation was needed so that food policy could reflect the values of the average Canadian.

The process of compiling the People's Food Policy was a nation-wide conversation about the kind of food system Canadians want and what government can and should do to help make it happen. Over the past two years, 3,500 people participated in the creation of the new plan, including people in populated cities and remote communities and farmers, fishers and consumers. All contributed their ideas for food policy and it took many different types of interactions, including 350 submissions from individuals and groups, 250 so-called "Kitchen Table Talk" community gatherings, and three national meetings. Finally, the input was compiled into 10 discussion papers on different themes, summarized in the short document called "Resetting the Table."

> Right now, close to two and a half million Canadians regularly have trouble putting food on the table. Canada is the only G8 country without a nationally-funded school meal program.

The People's Food Policy was a monumental process but actually picks up from another in-depth citizen-led initiative of 30 years ago called the "People's Food Commission." The commission held hearings in 75 communities and revealed the structure of the food system in Canada and the experiences of Canadians, including the plight of small-scale farms and fisheries as well as rising levels of poverty in cities and among Indigenous people. The PFP now updates this analysis and adds current proposals for making change.

Policy: What is it good for?

When communities are busy creating solutions on the ground, policy can sometimes seem removed, complicated and possibly unnecessary, but the PFP explains that policy is simply the guidelines by which decisions are made. For example, everyone has a personal food policy by which they decide what foods they will eat, how and where they will get them and so on. For some people, their food policy is determined by religious beliefs or how much money they have to buy food. Others are restricted in the food they can eat by allergies or other health factors. The problem is the current clash between the personal food policies of Canadians and the policies of our institutions and governments.

The institutions we interact with, such as schools, municipalities, provinces and the federal government, have food policies even when these are not obviously about food but about things like transportation, water management or funding priorities. Water management policies of a city, for example, might be a barrier to the establishment of a community garden or federal policy that allows for the patenting of seeds might be a barrier to a community developing their own locally adapted varieties. The purpose of the PFP is to spell out policies that would help rather than hinder the food movement.

Food policy or bust

"Our food system is failing us," said Amanda Sheedy, PFP coordinator. "The status quo is no longer an option." The PFP points out that right now close to two and a half million Canadians regularly have trouble putting food on the table. Canada is the only G8 country without a nationally-funded school meal program. At the same time, thousands of family farms are disappearing every year.

People across Canada are already taking matters into their own hands, connecting directly with food producers, reclaiming indigenous food systems and setting up food policy councils. All of this work is already transforming our food system from the ground up. Policies now need to support this work or get out of the way.

Lucy Sharratt is the Coordinator for the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network. www.cban.ca

Help create a national food policy

Sign on to the pledge to support a national food policy at www.peoplesfoodpolicy.ca

A national food policy will:

- Localize the system so food is eaten as close as possible to where it is produced and food dollars support the local economy.
- Support food providers in a widespread shift to ecological production, including programs to support new farmers getting on the land.
- Enact federal poverty elimination and prevention programs to ensure Canadians can better afford healthy food.
- Create a nationally funded children and food strategy. Ensure the public is actively involved in decisions that affect the food system.

Science Matters David Suzuki with contributions from Ian Hanington

Let's clean up our mess

I turned 75 in March. That means I probably won't be around to see the worst impacts of climate change or any other looming environmental disasters – or the much brighter future that may emerge if we get off our butts to address the problems.

But I'm also a father and grandfather and because I care about my children and grandchildren, and all the world's children, I continue to work and to speak out about environmental challenges and solutions.

Climate change is already having noticeable impacts around the world, including food shortages, increasing extreme weather events, shrinking glaciers and ice caps and rising sea levels.

It's unconscionable that we would condemn our children and grandchildren to an increasingly bleak future, especially when readily available solutions would help resolve many other global problems.

It shouldn't be up to young people to clean up the messes we have made. After all, we don't even allow them to vote. And they will be most affected by the decisions made today. But because so many adults have abdicated their responsibility to the world and its children, youth are taking matters into their own hands.

One young person in the US, 16-year-old Alec Loorz, is even taking his government to court over its inaction on climate change. He and others have launched actions against state and federal governments in an attempt to have the atmosphere declared a "public trust" that must be protected, a concept that has been used to clean up polluted rivers and coastlines. "We will let the world know that climate change is not about money, it's not about power, it's not about convenience," he says. "It's about our future. It's about the survival of this and every generation to come."

Alec Loorz started an organization called iMatter when he was just 13. He has rallied youth from around the world… to raise awareness about climate change. He argues that children have "the moral authority" to ask their parents and leaders, "Do I matter to you?"

It's a question that deserves an answer. For many adults, the honest answer would have to be, "No, we're more concerned about cheap gas, the economy, profits for the fossil fuel industry and having more stuff."

Reading about Alec Loorz reminded me of the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. My daughter Severn, who was just 12, gave a speech that silenced the delegates and brought many to tears. She asked the adults, "Are we even on your list of priorities?" She also reminded them "Losing a future is not like losing an election or a few points on the stock market."

Parents must become eco-warriors on behalf of their children because their future should be as important to us as it is to them.

After her speech, a reporter said to her, "Yeah, we've done a pretty lousy job of taking care of the environment, but you kids are different; you'll lead the way." I was astonished by her reply. "Oh," she said, "Is that the excuse for adults to do nothing?

Severn is now a mother herself and I'm proud that she takes her commitment to her child and to all children seriously. As well as being a great mom, she works hard to raise awareness about environmental issues through her writing, speaking and TV appearances. We owe it to our children and grandchildren to help clean up the messes we've made. We also owe them respect and support when they get involved and push us to do more for the world. Parents must become eco-warriors on behalf of their children because their future should be as important to us as it is to them.

www.davidsuzuki.org

Setting a plate for local food

Eating locally will never be more satisfying than this. Sharing a meal with friends is one of life's great pleasures, but sharing a meal with the people directly responsible for growing its ingredients can be revelatory. Sit side-by side-with farmers, producers and culinary artisans and partake in an unforgettable culinary experience created from their labours.

Learn what it's like to be farming today from the people who actually do it while supporting their cause for a vibrant, just and sustainable local food system. The dinner conversations promise to be wide-ranging and sure to include topics surrounding sustainable agriculture, food policy and food security.

In a recent *Globe and Mail* article, Cathleen Kneen, from the 'People's Food Policy Project', states rather prophetically: "Any jurisdiction that doesn't feed its people is at the mercy of whoever does."

Every ingredient for the meal will be sourced from suppliers to the Local Fresh Food Market. Located at 3010 Cambie St., the market is owned and operated by a committed group of BC food producers whose unique mandate is to supply Vancouver with only BC grown products – much of it coming from within100 kilometres of the store.

Event organizers Blaine Arnot from Savoury City Catering and Bonita Magee from FarmFolkCityFolk's goal for the event is to create awareness and support for the store as well as resurrecting the CSA spring/summer box program, which suffered a setback earlier this year when principal organizer Deb Reynolds filed for bankruptcy protection leaving subscribers out of pocket and out of luck.

The menu promises to deliver some seasonal highlights including select local seafood and farm fresh veggies paired with local BC wines. Event sponsors include Savoury City Catering, FarmFolkCityFolk, Firefly Fine Wines and Ale, Vancouver Farmers Market Society and Big Red Chair Event Rentals.

Setting a Plate for Local Food Celebration Dinner

June 24 Doors 6pm; Dinner 7pm
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Climate change a threat to food systems

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Regionally, it has been an abnormal spring with more rain, less sun and below average temperatures. Farmers are saying they can't remember a spring this bad. Early field crops of peas and beans have rotted in the ground, while small fruits are weeks behind their normal schedule – a significant blow after heavy rains in September ended last year's growing season a month early and wiped out potato, tomato, carrot and beet crops. Local produce will arrive late in stores this year and the shorter growing season means a 20 percent below normal harvest. Even greenhouse growers are predicting 15 percent lower yields due to low light conditions this spring.

Watching the impact of climate change on local food production gives me the jitters, but rows of vegetables, fruit trees and berry bushes growing in my backyard provide a level of reassurance. It was not that long ago that 45 percent of fruits and vegetables consumed were grown in backyard gardens and with what is happening today, it only makes sense that we grow more of our own food.

The cool weather crops were finally planted out in mid-May; fava beans and peas are on their way up amidst rows of lettuces, kale, chard, onions, leeks, cress, broccoli, potatoes, cabbage and beets. The garlic patch, planted last October, has never looked better, as garlic thrives in cool, moist conditions.

The heat lovers – tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, basil, beans corn and squash – struggle to get better established in the greenhouse, from where they will be planted out in June. Small-scale, diversified food production pays off when farmers cannot get their crops in the fields due to floods or drought.

The planter boxes that provided fresh greens throughout winter have been top-dressed with compost, replanted and seeded for the summer/fall harvest. We are growing colourful lettuces, chards, mints, spinach, arugula, cress, parsley and pea shoots in these boxes. By tucking in some calendula and viola for edible flowers, we have created some beautiful edible displays.

Grow some self-seeding food plants and let them go to seed so you get more food. Kales, chard, parsley, arugula, cilantro, cresses, corn salad and spinach will all reappear in the garden if some of the best plants are left to go to seed. Better yet, save some seeds to exchange with neighbours or to trade at your local Seedy Saturday show in the spring. Without access to open-pollinated food seeds, we cannot achieve sustainable food production.

Most important in food production cycles is access to clean water. Consider installing a water catchment system of barrels and run roof gutters into them for water storage in periods of drought. Our current system of concentrated food production drains aquifers, lakes and ground water, which jeopardizes the ability of future generations to farm. Only when we learn respect for natural resources and processes will we truly be able to feed ourselves sustainably and there's no better place to learn this than in your own backyard.

Grow real food
for real sustainability

There are multiple benefits to growing your own food. Real food becomes readily available, grown in soil and ripened by the sun. It is rich in disease-fighting phytonutrients, which improves the health of the population. It provides a shelter from skyrocketing food prices due to rising oil costs and global food shortages from failing harvests. It alleviates the depressing symptoms of nature deficit disorder. Children know where food comes from and how to grow it for greater self-reliance. There's no need to pay for the gym. Exercise comes free (and with rewards). It creates improved food security at a time when the global, industrialized food system is unravelling due to effects of climate change.

Carolyn Herriot is author of **The Zero-Mile Diet: A Year-Round Guide to Growing Organic Food** (Harbour Publishing). She is a food security consultant and grows 'Seeds of Victoria' at The Garden Path Centre in Victoria, BC. http://earthfuture.com/gardenpath/

Raw for a day

If you'd like a raw adventure, here's an experiment to try. Turn your back on your toaster, microwave and stove and eat uncooked foods for a day. The menu below was developed for travelling or for those days when you need to cut preparation to a minimum. To meet recommended calcium intakes without milks or supplements, greens are in every meal, even breakfast! Figs, oranges, tahini and greens – lettuce, snow peas, and broccoli – all are rich in calcium. Tahini and orange juice can be stirred or shaken together to make a dressing or dip. Fresh raw corn is delicious. Eating this way takes a while; when time is short, blending some items can help. A mini blender allows you to create smoothies, raw soups and dressings and dips while travelling. Following the menu, you'll find an impressive nutritional analysis and caloric variations.

Breakfast

- 2 cups raspberries or other berries
- 3 figs
- 4 cups romaine lettuce

or

- 1 blue-green smoothie (blueberries, banana, and greens)

Lunch and snacks throughout the day

- 2 1/2 cups (2 packages) snow peas or whole pea pods
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes
- 4 oranges
- 3 bananas or other fruit
- Trail mix: 1/3 cup walnuts, 1 Brazil nut, 1/4 cup currants

Supper

- Corn: 2 cobs
- 1 cup each: broccoli florets, carrot sticks and zucchini
- Veggie dip: 1/4 cup sesame tahini mixed with 1/4 cup orange juice (or use Lemon Tahini Dressing below)

Nutritional analysis: calories: 2057; protein: 60 g; fat: 64 g; carbohydrate: 361 g; sugar: 167 g; dietary fibre: 78 g; calcium: 1025 mg; iron: 21 mg; magnesium: 676 mg; potassium: 7087 mg; sodium: 262 mg; zinc: 11 mg; thiamin: 3.3 mg; riboflavin: 2.0 mg; niacin: 32 mg; folate: 1108 mcg; vitamin B12: 0 mcg; vitamin A: 1874 mcg; vitamin C: 838 mg; omega-3 fatty acids: 4.3 g.

Percentage of calories from protein 11%; from fat 25%; from carbohydrate 64%.

For a 1600-1700-calorie menu, omit the currants, one banana and one cob of corn.

For a 2500-calorie menu, increase fruits, nuts and veggies throughout the day by 25 percent according to your preferences.

Lemon tahini dressing

- 1/2 cupv sesame tahini
- 1/4 cup lemon juice
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1 clove garlic, chopped
- 2 tbsp tamari
- 1/2 tsp pepper (or to taste)
- 1/2 cup water (or less for a dip)
- Combine ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth.

Sunday June 5: Learn more about raw food and nutrition at a raw food event in the Fraser Valley. "Raw Food Diets: What's True, What's Not?"

Can we survive–and thrive on a raw food diet? Do our bodies need the enzymes from plant foods? Are cooked foods toxic? Is food combining important for optimal digestion and health? For maximum benefit, must our diet be 100 percent raw? What does a nutritionally adequate raw food diet look like?

Raw dinner 6pm. Vesanto Melina's presentation 7-8:30pm.

Trinity Memorial United Church, 33737 George Ferguson Way, Abbotsford. (See www.meetup.com/Raw-in-Abbotsford). $5 per person if you bring food to share (raw, vegan, preferably organic and enough for 8 people). Guests may come without a dish and pay $10 per person, but they must let hosts know they are coming. Call Monika at 604.853.7328 or email monikaserwa@shaw.ca

Vesanto Melina is co-author of **Becoming Raw, the Raw Food Revolution Diet** and other vegetarian classics. www.nutrispeak.com

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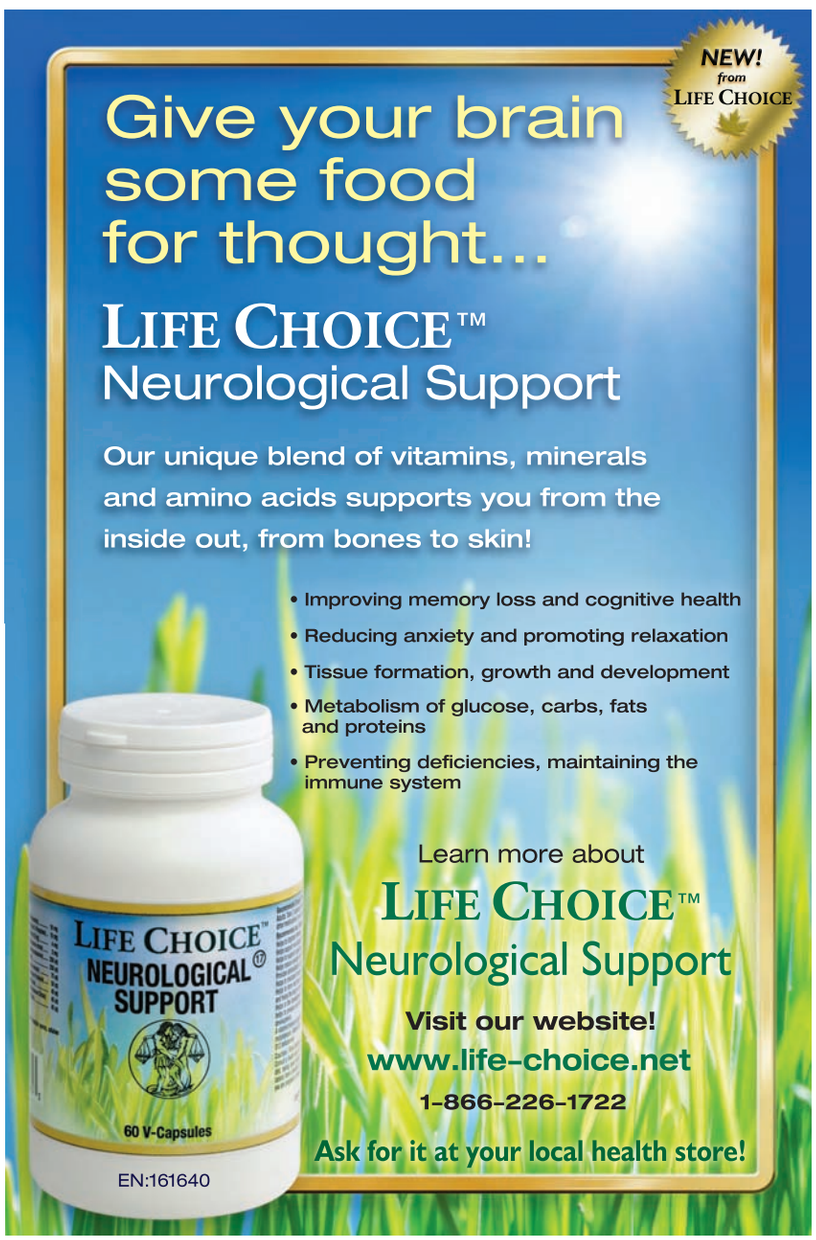
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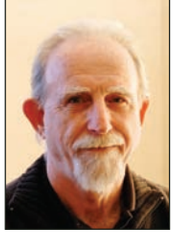

Mac McLaughlin

ZODIAC

StarWise June 2011

WE START THE MONTH with a solar eclipse on June 1, followed by a lunar eclipse on June 15, finishing up the month with the summer solstice on June 21. That is a whole lot of planetary energy expressed through the Sun and the Moon. The Gemini new Moon (solar eclipse) indicates a time of increased communication and heightened business, trade and exchange. Saturn forms a triangle with the new Moon indicating a move towards harmony, balance and rhythm throughout the month. Mercury, lord of the new Moon, is in square with Neptune hinting at possible lies and deception being revealed. Confusion, misdirection and mistakes are the general themes with this type of energy unfolding. Read the fine print, assume nothing and get the facts.

Overall, we have a great opportunity to get it right for a change and there will be ample opportunities to fail if we become too lackadaisical. Careful consideration and being patient and honourable is the way to go. Any form of hurry and worry with a mix of confusion can spell trouble. Expressed another way, we might say, "Measure twice, cut once."

The full Moon (lunar eclipse) on June 15 holds great promise, at least in the sense

ARIES Mar 21 - Apr 19
Aries are not long-term planners. Instinctive, reactive and intuitive, you will know when to make a change. Live in the moment, plan a little bit and remain ready to adapt and adjust to the universal plan, which is guaranteed to take place.

TAURUS Apr 20 - May 21
A very dynamic and opportune time has arrived. Watch for what you wish for as you may very well have your dreams come through. You can party hearty and dance the nights away or truly strive to make something of yourself.

GEMINI May 22 - Jun 20
A steady stream of things to do, places to go and people to see create a whirlwind month in which important changes congeal. Revelations and all kinds of realizations take place as the full Moon illuminates your inner psyche on June 15.

CANCER Jun 21 - Jul 22
The summer solstice on June 21 heralds your solar high of the year. However, you may not be feeling too high as you come to terms with the Herculean tasks that must be accomplished in order for you to realize your goals and dreams.

LEO Jul 23 - Aug 22
Often, it's whom you know that gets you where you want to go. Now is the time to extend yourself to others. Friends and connections multiply. Possible romance and strong activity related to business and career objectives unfold. Just be your sunny self.

VIRGO Aug 23 - Sep 22
Travel and career sectors are hot. Home and family activities are important too. It's all about organization and systemization, which are truly Virgoan topics anyway. Do one thing at a time wholly and soulfully, as you sort through all you must do.

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that whatever concerns we have been on about will come to some form of culmination or completion. We come to terms with what we've learned through the news media, as we adjust continuously to the conditions, however and wherever we must. I hope I'm not being too optimistic, but it looks like we're getting a break and we can relax as we approach the summer season.

The summer solstice on June 21 unfolds with a mix of planetary energy that needs some deciphering. Mercury and Saturn square off just after the solstice indicating some type of concern regarding transportation, communication and agreements. The solstice chart gives an indication of the energy prevailing over the next three months. The economy, gas prices and international concerns may not be easily resolved and there may be a fair amount of frustration and confusion as we start the summer season. I sense a cosmic break in which we are able to get down to having some fun for a while. How many elections, wars, protestations, machinations and recriminations must we bear?

It is time to heal and prepare for the future and for our children. The Sun is in good aspect with Neptune at the time of the solstice bringing a renewed faith and a broader capacity to love and respect one another. One people, one planet.

LIBRA Sep 23 - Oct 22
Life's mysteries deepen and so will your love and compassion. Inheritances, joint monies and other such matters come to the fore. Travel and the higher mind pique your interest. The dawning light of hope casts its rays your way. A sombre wisdom fortifies you.

SCORPIO Oct 23 - Nov 21
Is it better to be loved or feared? Now is a time in which success can be achieved. It all depends on how you handle power and people. Inspiration versus intimidation – it's all up to you. Sparks are flying in every direction.

SAGITTARIUS Nov 22 - Dec 21
Set a pace and stay within it throughout June. There will be quite a demand on your time and energy. The Sagittarius lunar eclipse on June 15 will bring important revelations regarding present-day concerns. The swords may come out in the last half of the month.

CAPRICORN Dec 22 - Jan 19
A potent mix of planetary energy unfolds throughout the month. Love and friendships blossom as does a great appreciation for all that life has to offer. A transformative time has arrived in which many changes come your way. You are on a mission of discovery.

AQUARIUS Jan 20 - Feb 19
Home, family and real estate feature this month. Career opportunities wax stronger and your best years (age appropriate) are on the horizon. Education, travel, writing and publishing are strong interests now. Move forward with confidence. All efforts pay handsomely in the future.

PISCES Feb 20 - Mar 20
A move may be in the works as a possible career opportunity congeals. Resources increase and a love interest develops in the last half of the month. The birth of a child or grandchild sets you on a new course. Spiritual values increase strongly.

Mac McLaughlin has been a practising, professional astrologer for more than four decades. His popular **Straight Stars** column ran in Vancouver's largest weekly newspaper for 11 years. Email mac@macsstars.com or call 604-731-1109

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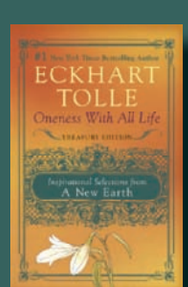

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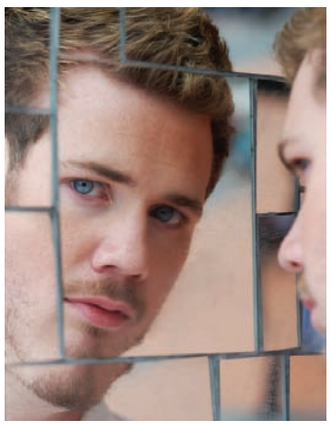
What kind of *self-image* do you have?



The experience of attending to one's 'self-image' has been around since humans started to talk to each other about their personal experiences. What is interesting is that so few untrained people ever notice their visualizations of self. Even fewer think about the effectiveness of their own self-image. It usually remains as part of the hidden code, the 'program' that organizes the trajectory of their self-development.

Ask yourself carefully, "What kind of self-image do I currently have?" When asked this question, many people notice that their self-image is largely linked to self-feeling. People mainly associate into ideas about themselves that they have taken on previously. They identify with and feel their self-evaluation, as if real.

Have you thought about what you do? A person who has the belief that something is wrong with his or her body may immediately feel an inner sense of disappointment or failure connected to body image. For instance, the person may believe he or she is too fat or too thin or has a big nose or bad teeth. This becomes a frame for ongoing self-criticism and evaluatory inner conversation. The person inwardly takes the position of an external judge criticizing "the big nose."

Now ask yourself this: on a scale from one to 10, with one being low and 10 being totally satisfied, how satisfied are you with the image you currently hold?

To be effective with our mental maps, we need to build a dissociated self-image. In other words, we need to see an image of our valued self in action so we can follow a visual movie that shows the self being and doing what we value. Dissociated viewing may be described like the view from a movie camera. You see yourself in your 'inner recall and projection system.' We need to see ourselves from an outsider's viewpoint so we can see our face, body and walk, detailing the qualities we value. Dissociated viewing assists us to learn quickly and easily in any important area of our life, but especially our values.

> A person who has the belief that something is wrong with his or her body may immediately feel an inner sense of disappointment or failure connected to body image.

Take a small moment now just to see your face and full body in an event in which you became inspired. See the qualities you showed in physical and facial movement, perhaps inner wisdom, warm radiance, strong leadership and/or light hearted humour. Watch the You in the moment when you are revealing these qualities in eyes, gesture, body, walk, laughter. Now, really appreciate that one inwardly. Sense the growing value of your life.

Marilyn Atkinson is the president of Erickson Coaching International. 604-879-5600 www.erickson.edu

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Healing the victim

Whenever a client queries, "Why does this keep happening to me?" I can be pretty sure an old, often subconscious, pattern is being played out. It may be repeatedly attracting unfaithful or abusive partners, getting into business deals that always go sideways or having a dysfunctional relationship with a teen that mirrors the dysfunctional relationship one had with his/her own parents. Sometimes we even behave like our parents did even if we dislike those behaviors.

If we are functioning in an unconscious way, we blame the outside world or other people, even adopting a victim stance. We keep attracting people or situations that confirm our belief that the cause for our misery is external and the world is an unfriendly or unfair place.

Once we begin to truly value ourselves and no longer allow others to treat us badly, we do get more respect. This is because we start to set boundaries.

If the negative patterns that we experienced left us with low self-esteem and disempowered, it is easy to see how difficult it would be to change these patterns. Since I believe life is about learning and growing, I see these repeating patterns as opportunities for growth and change. Life situations can be compared to simulated exercises we undertake to gain strength and skill. They can also be compared to school learning. If the child keeps getting a particular math question wrong, he ultimately has to figure out what he is doing wrong and what he needs to do differently to get the correct answer.

When the patterns from childhood show up in adulthood, we are given an opportunity to do what we could not do as a child. A child does not have power. She cannot stand up to the adult or leave the situation. Now, as an adult, she does have this power, although she may need support and guidance to get in touch with it and to find the courage to use it.

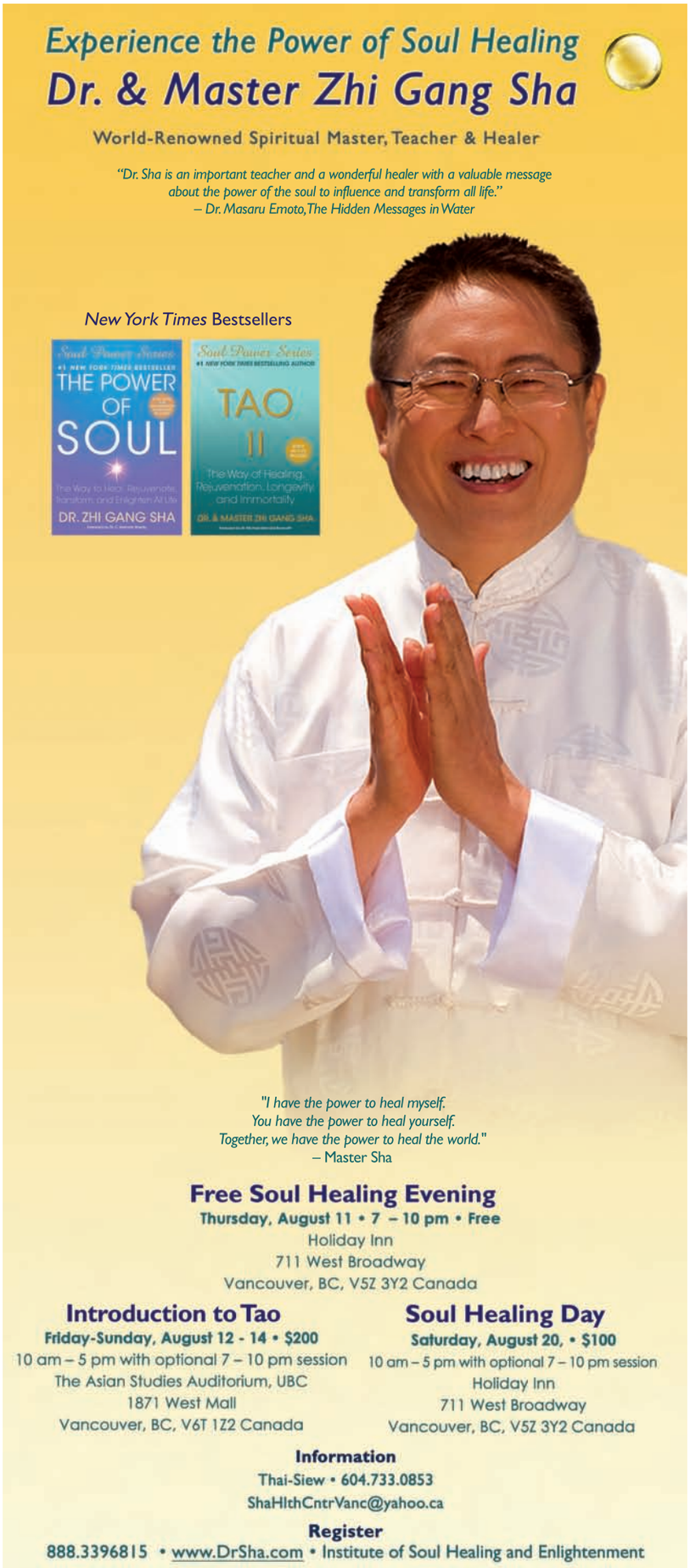
In the process of changing the pattern, there are a number of important changes required on an inner level. The individual has to begin to value him/herself, no longer depending on outside validation. We have to become our own best friend. There is also a need to tend to our own wounded inner child. We have to become a strong parent to her so she relies on us, rather than upon others for validation, acceptance and even love.

We have to value ourselves enough to remove ourselves from people and situations that are unhealthy for us. We would never leave our child with an abusive caregiver or one who did not meet our child's needs, so why, as an adult, would we leave *ourselves* in such a situation?

Significantly, once we begin to truly value ourselves and no longer allow others to treat us badly, we do get more respect. This is because we start to set boundaries with the people in our lives and if they are not respected, we leave.

It can be scary for someone lacking confidence and belief in oneself to leave a bad situation and venture into the unknown. That is the inner child's reaction: to choose to stay with the known, abusive parent rather than go into an unknown situation. But we must remember we are adults and we can strengthen our wise inner adult. We must know if we stay in a negative pattern, life will just be more of the same and we will continue to deny ourselves the opportunity to live the life we truly deserve.

Gwen Randall-Young is an author and psychotherapist in private practice. For articles and information about her books, CDs and the new "Creating Healthy Relationships" series, visit www.gwen.ca See display ad this issue.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Marilyn - I wanted to say again how grateful I am to you. Thank you! I was so moved in so many ways during the weekend in Advance of the Spirit. I loved your presentation style and the exercises and the content. Thank you, thank you thank you! With warm regard, ~ Deb

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Just now

an interview with Eckhart Tolle

To read Eckhart Tolle's latest column, please see the current print edition of Common Ground. For copyright reasons, we are authorized to publish this column in our print version only.

JR: In your new book, I feel like you're the modern equivalent of the explorers that came to the new world, but an explorer and documenter of consciousness, discovering a new world.

ET: Yes, discovering is the right word. It's not that you need to make a great effort to attain it or bring it about or acquire it. It's discovering it's already there in you – conscious awareness that's obscured, or partially obscured, in many people. It's a discovery of something already there.

It's like waking up after a dream, because identification with the thinking mind and its stories and the old emotional conditioning is like being immersed in a kind of dream world, which very often turns into a nightmare – acting out old conditioned patterns again and again. The whole structure of the egoic mind is an old dysfunction.

There's some evidence that the ego started about 6,000 years ago, but nobody can say for sure. Before that, humans were in a state of innocence. When we go beyond the dysfunction of the ego, we regain our original innocence, but on a much deeper level. This is why Jesus said unless we become as little children we cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.

So, returning to the original innocence, and at the same time going much deeper into that with full awareness – that's the process. We're coming out of thousands of years of dreadful suffering, almost the whole of recorded history of humanity. If you really look at it in an unbiased way, as if you'd never seen it before, one cannot but admit that, to a large extent, 80 to 90 percent of it is a history of pathological insanity, the suffering that humans have created for themselves and, of course, inflicting it upon others.

JR: And exporting it through colonization to the new world.

ET: Yes, so the important part of the awakening process is the realization of the insanity in human history, collectively, to this day playing itself out in world events. Also, to be aware of the insanity within oneself – old, dysfunctional patterns that come again and again that create suffering. So when you see that you're insane, then you're not completely insane. Sanity comes the moment you realize the fact of insanity. To see insanity is not a negative thing.

JR: At least you're out of denial.

ET: Yes, that's why in the film A Beautiful Mind, for example, which is about a mathematical genius who did have a mental dysfunction, his mind was developed in certain areas but he was also insane. The viewer of the film doesn't know that until a certain point when the character realizes that many of his experiences are delusions. At that moment, his healing begins. He's not cured yet, but his healing begins because he's recognized his own insanity. That recognition can only come out of sanity, which is the awareness of unconditioned consciousness.

JR: I remember you saying before you published your last book that the next one would be about why there isn't peace on this planet. Was finding a solution one of the major intentions of A New Earth?

ET: Yes, to see the nature of the major dysfunction. That's why I talk quite a bit about the ego in this book. We need to recognize the nature of the dysfunction. Sometimes, even very great Eastern teachers sometimes neglect that part because they're not really touched by the magnitude of, especially, the Western ego. So it's very important for us to see the dysfunction so that we can recognize it when it arises.

Part of the new book is about recognizing the ego, which I regard as a semi-autonomous energy. It's an energy field. Every thought you think is an energy field. It has a form and then it dissolves and then there is another form. The ego itself is an energy field and it has a collective and individual aspect. Every indi-

vidual ego is part of the collective. They're connected. Every individual is a manifestation of the collective. To recognize that is essential because the ego, being a very clever entity, has many ways of reappearing. Even if you've seen it in one disguise, it can suddenly reappear in a new one.

You might suddenly realize your whole sense of self, identity, is being derived from your possessions and social position. You see that your whole sense of identity is bound up with that and you recognize one aspect of ego. Well, usually it only comes to people when they suffer, when the identification with something no longer works…

It's recognizing the ego in its many disguises. I've met Buddhist monks who had enormous egos without knowing it. I remember being in a monastery afraid to approach them because they seemed so aloof. Yet I've met other Buddhist monks who were like little children and it was a joy to talk to them because they'd laugh and not take themselves seriously at all. They didn't take the whole Buddhist

thing seriously either, yet they practised it knowing it was only a form and they weren't identified with it.

There's a dimension in us that has nothing to do with content. Self-realization is that I am not that. I'm not my story, not my grievances and hang-ups, not the story of me that I'm telling other people at parties or repeating in my head again and again. That is only form. It's temporary.

When you see what you're not, it's already liberating. Something inside you breathes a sigh of relief. Then, of course, the mind begins to ask, "What are you if you are not that?" It wants an answer. In other words, it wants some new form. It wants a new thought. There must be a thought that I am. But it doesn't work like that. That's why the great book the Tao Te Ching starts with the line that the Tao that can be spoken of is not the true Tao because Tao – in the ancient Chinese way of putting it – is the formless dimension. You could say pure consciousness, but with any term we use we have to be careful it's not mistaken for "It." Otherwise, the mind comes in and says, "Oh, consciousness, yes. I believe that I'm consciousness." It's not another belief. It's finding that spaciousness inside yourself that's there when you let go of identification of form.

Excerpted from **Just now: a two-part interview with Eckhart Tolle** by Joseph Roberts. Read the full interview online. Go to www.commonground.ca Click on archives. Click on 2007 at the top of the page. For part one, click on September 2007. For part two, click on October 2007.

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ENVIROBITES

The home front

Urban coyotes

There are an estimated 2,000 to 3,000 coyotes (*Canis latrans*) living in Greater Vancouver. Coyote encounters are common and the need to better understand this population is growing.

Phil Dubrulle, Stanley Park Ecology Society's "Co-Existing with Coyotes" program coordinator, explains, "Spring is denning season for coyotes and with new pups to protect, coyote behaviour shifts so they may become more territorial close to den sites" from April to June. Pups typically emerge from the den around four to five weeks after birth and the family will stop using the den after eight to 10 weeks. Den sites are generally hard to find, as coyotes will build them behind thick, natural barriers such as thorny blackberry bushes often in golf courses or parks. In the urban environment, coyotes have adapted their denning strategy to also include digging holes under manmade structures such as the foundations of buildings.

Dubrulle adds, "If you are aware of an active den site, there are three basic steps you can take to ensure the safety of people, pets and the coyotes themselves. Report den sites and pup sightings to the Co-Existing with Coyotes program so we can help to inform and educate the community. People and pets should avoid the identified area from mid-April through early June. Keep a watchful eye out for people leaving food in the area. Some people believe they are helping the coyotes by feeding them when, in fact, they are contributing to coyotes becoming habituated to humans, which may ultimately lead to conflicts.

"People spend more time outdoors during the longer daylight hours and they are thus more likely to encounter coyotes. Coyotes are wild animals and they should be treated with caution and respect." If you see a coyote, call or email the Co-Existing with Coyotes hotline: 604-681-WILD.

photo © Larry Jordan

A non-profit organization since 1988, the **Stanley Park Ecology Society** promotes awareness of and respect for the natural world by playing a leadership role in the stewardship of Stanley Park through collaborative initiatives in education, research and conservation.

The world at large

World not ready for genetically engineered trees

The genetically engineered tree company ArborGen, a joint project of timber corporations International Paper, MeadWestvaco and Rubicon, decided suddenly on May 12 to change its plans and not sell shares in ArborGen publicly on the NASDAQ exchange, suggesting the company recognizes the market is not ready to support GE trees. (http://globaljusticeecology.org/stopgetrees.php?ID=554&tabs=2)

No artificially drought tolerant corn on the horizon

Monsanto has asked the US to approve a GM "drought tolerant" corn, but the US Department of Agriculture says the GM version is no better than non-GM corn varieties. The USDA notes, "Equally comparable varieties produced through conventional breeding techniques are readily available in irrigated corn production regions." Monsanto's rivals DuPont and Syngenta both announced new non-GM drought tolerant corn varieties earlier this year. Indigenous non-GM drought tolerant crop varieties are also readily available.

Bolivia passes first-ever Law of Mother Earth

On Earth Day, something groundbreaking happened in Bolivia. The country passed the Law of Mother Earth, the world's first piece of legislation that gives the natural world rights equal to those of humans. Bolivia has long suffered from serious environmental problems from the mining of tin, silver, gold and other raw materials. Farmers have also had land and crops decimated by multinational corporations. Existing laws to protect natural resources were not strong enough. The Law of Mother Earth includes the following:

- The right to maintain the integrity of life and natural processes.
- The right to not have cellular structure modified or genetically altered.
- The right to continue vital cycles and processes free from human alteration.
- The right to pure water.
- The right to clean air.
- The right to balance, to be at equilibrium.
- The right to be free of toxic and radioactive pollution.
- The right to not be affected by mega-infrastructure and development projects that affect the balance of ecosystems and the local inhabitant communities

The law also promotes "harmony" and "peace" and "the elimination of all nuclear, chemical, biological" weapons.

- by **Jordan Namerow**. Posted at http://ajws.org

GM food labelling sovereignty

There is one more step, but if approved at another meeting this summer, the language finalized May 12 at a UN Codex meeting in Quebec would allow any country to pass its own national GM [genetically modified] food labelling laws without worrying about the US or Canada bringing a trade challenge under the World Trade Organization.

Making history

After 10 years of campaigning, any product containing GMOs must now be placed on separate shelving in supermarkets in Cyprus. This is the first such law in Europe.

Peru fights for food sovereignty

The Minister of Agriculture in Peru resigned, apparently motivated by the criticisms against him over his support for the introduction of GM crops in Peru and his relationship to a company that uses these products. Different sectors of society in Peru, including some of the most important groups of farmers, scientists and chefs, have formed a coalition to fight GMOs to "… ensure respect for the rights of food sovereignty and security obtained through biodiversity, agriculture and Peruvian cuisine."

Experts no match for India's environment minister

The moratorium on GM eggplant (brinjal) in India is likely to continue, despite the expert committee set up by the environment ministry favouring "limited release" of the crop. Environment minister Jairam Ramesh has made it clear his ministry was against such a move, saying, "There is no such thing as limited release."

Monsanto patents the melon

Research conducted by the European coalition No Patents on Seeds! shows that in May 2011 Monsanto was awarded a European patent on conventionally bred melons (EP 1 962 578). Melons have a natural resistance to certain plant viruses. It is especially evident in melons grown in India. Using conventional breeding methods, this type of resistance was introduced to other melons and has now been patented as a Monsanto "invention." In a precedent decision, the European Patent Office (EPO) decided in December 2010 that conventional breeding could not be patented. However, the EPO just excluded the process for melon breeding. The plants and all parts of the plant, such as the seeds and the melon fruit, have been patented as an invention.

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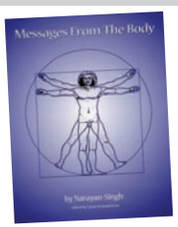

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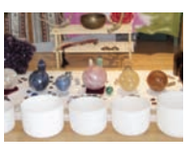

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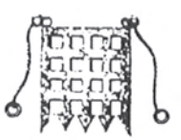

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*...**Drug Bust** from pg. 9*

rhythm, wrenching bone, joint and muscle pain, bone loss in the jaw (osteonecrosis) as well as an increased risk of thighbone fractures. Do they still reduce hip fractures? Even that picture is muddy, as a recent Danish study on the long-term use of these drugs showed they actually increase the risk of hip fractures.

In the hullabaloo over what to do about osteoporosis, we seem to forget the thinning of our bones happens naturally with age. The density of your bones is about as relevant to whether you fall and break a hip as the greyness of your hair or the number of wrinkles you have. In other words, it is a pretty irrelevant measurement.

We know there are cheap and simple solutions to prevent falls – which cause over 95 percent of hip fractures – such as fixing our sidewalks and making sure we use them, for instance getting some weight-bearing exercise through walking.

At the end of the day, those promoting bone density testing or drugs for osteoporosis are the same people lobbying our government to pay even more for these drugs. Consumers don't need more expensive and questionable health interventions marketed to them. As for the question "Should you or should you not take a bone density test?" it's useful to ask yourself other questions such as "Am I scared?" "Will the bone density test reduce my fear?" "Will a drug make things better?" If you answer no to these questions, maybe it's better to leave well enough alone.

Alan Cassels is a drug policy researcher at the University of Victoria. Read more of what he's writing about at www.alan-cassels.com

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Independent Media Steve Anderson

Surveillance laws on the horizon

I want to start this column with a statement from the Office of the Privacy Commission: "Privacy is often viewed as a fundamental human right and, arguably, the right from which many other essential freedoms flow: individual autonomy and decision-making, freedom of speech, freedom of association and freedom of thought."

Within the first 100 days of Parliament, the government has promised to push through a set of invasive, anti-internet, "Lawful Access" electronic surveillance laws. If passed, these laws will turn internet service providers (ISPs) against their own customers by making them collect our personal information without court oversight. If this internet surveillance bill goes through, authorities will have real-time access to our personal online information.

Why should Canadians be concerned about these internet surveillance laws?

1. It will force internet service providers to identify anonymous customers upon request, without the need to demonstrate any evidence these customers have done anything wrong.

2. It will implement open-ended requirements that may force millions of dollars in ISP investment in new surveillance technologies. This cost will be passed on to Canadians.

3. The laws make the unwarranted seizure of our personal information legal; therefore, in future, there will be no way to track the use and abuse of these unchecked powers.

4. A coalition of Canadian Privacy Commissioners has expressed deep concern regarding these bills, which, in their words, "enhanc[e] the capacity of the state to conduct surveillance and access private information while reducing the frequency and vigour of judicial scrutiny." This will be done, the Commissioners continue, in the absence of any evidence demonstrating need.

5. Elements of these laws will absolve service providers from any obligation to verify that state agents are legitimately requesting information before handing it over.

The federal government has promised to pass a large proportion of these invasive laws soon after Parliament reconvenes, bundled along with dozens of other crime prevention laws. This will leave little, if any room, for substantive debate. According to the Privacy Commissioner, "the federal government has presented no compelling evidence that new powers are needed."

If passed, these laws will turn internet service providers (ISPs) against their own customers by making them collect our personal information without court oversight.

These internet surveillance policies have the potential to fundamentally reshape the internet in Canada. Police and other authorities must have the tools and information necessary to do their jobs, but these bills go too far; they both threaten the open internet and violate our fundamental right to privacy.

In Canada, we need a positive agenda for our digital future and these laws move us in the wrong direction. OpenMedia.ca has put forth a well-researched report that looks at the economic, technical and cultural aspects of internet openness, as well as international comparisons and Canadian public opinion. The report, entitled "Casting an Open Net," includes a citizen-centred action plan for a gouge-free, open and affordable internet.

See *Casting an Open Net* at www.openmedia.ca/report

Steve Anderson is the national coordinator for OpenMedia.ca He has written for **The Tyee, Toronto Star, Epoch Times** and **Adbusters**. steve@openmedia.ca, www.FacebookSteve.com, www.SteveOnTwitter.com

Comedy and real life drama

High seas activist Paul Watson has waged a single-minded campaign to protect marine life – *from* Eco-Pirate: The Story of Paul Watson. *Courtesy of eonefilms.com.*

In 1910, a couple of female academics from England, on a visit to the Gardens of Versailles, inadvertently walked through a time portal into pre-revolutionary France. The so-called 'Ghosts of Trianon' have fascinated generations since, given the intimate, historical detail the two apparently rational, conservative witnesses provided.

Woody Allen's latest film *Midnight in Paris* picks up on this time-travelling, ghostly theme, maintaining the mystery but milking the situation for romantic comedy. Owen Wilson plays the central Allen-esque character, the likeable, but insecure, Hollywood hack Gil Pender, who, while vacationing in Paris with his unbearable fiancée Inez (Rachel McAdams) and reactionary future in-laws, struggles for inspiration to complete his first novel about nostalgia.

One evening, while walking home after a wine-tasting session, he gets lost and ends up resting on a church stair where, at the strike of midnight, a classic car pulls up and the champagne-swilling passengers beckon him to join them. Before he knows it, Gil has been whisked off to a 1920s Paris jazz club where he mingles with his literary heroes, Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway among them.

The literary tone of the dialogue – Hemingway speaks like his prose – suggests we are in Gil's fantasy. What becomes increasingly clear as Gil starts making repeat visits down the rabbit hole, even finding romance with smouldering beauty Adriana (Marion Cotillard), is that these artistic greats are trapped in a Woody Allen comedy. Time-travel becomes an almost trivial thing, as Gil starts using his 1920s friends as a literary support group and showing off his insider knowledge in contemporary time to impress his fiancée.

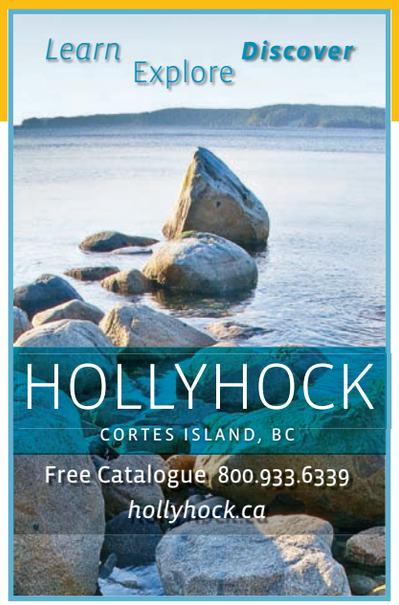
There is a more serious message about not idealizing the past, yet the film also indulges in a romanticized vision of Paris that could have been shot by the French tourist board. Really, this is just a bit of light-hearted fun.

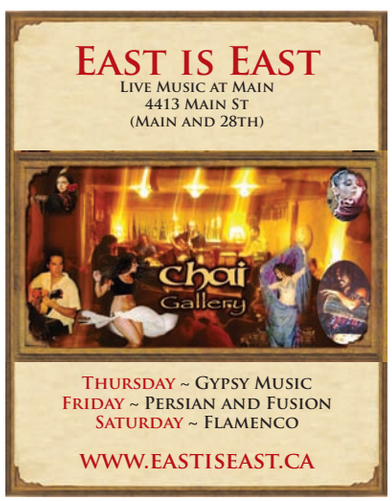
In *Eco-Pirate: The Story of Paul Watson*, Vancouver filmmaker Trish Dolman takes a warts 'n' all look at "the Rambo of the environmental movement." Watson, who recalls his vocational moment as the time he looked into the eye of a dying whale, comes across as single-minded in his fight for marine life, to the exclusion of even his own family. The documentary does a good job of revealing the tensions among the early Greenpeace founders over campaign tactics while also explaining why Watson formed the Sea Shepherd Society to tackle whalers more aggressively after a split during a campaign over the clubbing of baby seals.

However, there is too much of Patrick Moore, who has made a career trading on his credentials as a Greenpeace founder while lobbying for resource extraction corporations. Rex Weyler, another Greenpeace founder, provides vivid commentary about the early days and the cavalier Watson proves to be a lightning rod for questions about which actions are appropriate and effective.

Finally, five films from Toronto's Hot Docs are screening at VIFC later this month (June 24-26). Among them is *Project Nim* (on 25th), from James Marsh (*Man on Wire*), which follows the highs and lows of a chimpanzee who was made famous by a seventies experiment to see if an ape could communicate like a human if raised like a human.

Robert Alstead made the Vancouver documentary **You Never Bike Alone** www.youneverbikealone.com. He writes at www.2020Vancouver.com





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JUN 7
IPCC lecture, Vancouver. Free evening lecture by Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change top climate scientist, Dr. Thomas Stocker. Details: www.pics.uvic.ca/events

JUN 10-12
Introduction to Foot Reflexology commences Certificate Weekend Training Course. Introduction 7.30 pm $10; Course $395. Pacific Institute of Reflexology (604) 875-8818. www.pacificreflexology.com

JUN 11
Open to all. Tired of Back and Neck Pain? DON'T MISS: Reboot Your Body Workshop. Register: www.bowencollege.com / 1-866-DoBowen.

JUN 11
Quartete a Tete in Concert: St James Hall, 3214 West 10th Ave., Vancouver. Featuring Lynn McGown, Michael Pratt, Craig McGregor and Vanessa Kay. Tickets $20, information

JUNE 11 & 25
Enchant Mantra Meditation Bhagavad-gita, Vegetarian snacks, Unity Yoga, 10th Ave @ Commercial Drive, 6-8:30pm. By Donation enchant108@gmail.com 604-222-2299.

JUN 12
Wolfsong Chanting Circle Welcome Summer Celebration: 7-10pm. Participate singing sacred healing chants from the Spirit of the Land. At St. Mark's Trinity, 1805 Larch St. & 2nd Ave near W. 4th & McDonald. By donation. Earthsong Healing Circles. www.shamanichealing. Info 604.418.9636.

JUN 12
Mirabai Ceiba Sacred Chant concert: Sun. 7:30pm, Alix Goolden Hall, 907 Pandora Ave., Victoria. Tickets: $25, 250-920-4037 or online: spiritvoyage.com

JUN 14
Champions Workshop: 7pm Holiday Inn North Vancouver. Learn the Secret Formula of Champions. Tickets $20 advance. www.klemmer.com code: 7833C6 www.flourishevenproductions.com

JUN 14
Food Security. Free Vancouver evening forum. Learn what scientists predict for BC's climate and how we are preparing. Details: www.pics.uvic.ca/events.php

JUN 15
Highpoint of the Spiritual Year "Festival of Humanity." Join us in meditation for world transformation. FREE. 7-9pm, Roundhouse Community Centre (Pacific @ Davie). 604.983.0926.

JUN 15
Join us for Nature Play Day in Canada! Events across the country. Go to www.natureplayday.ca for more information. Get outside!

JUN 16
Tune into the God wave frequency and have a new view of reality and new way of life. Healing Ctr. (Parking entrance) 535 W. 10th Ave., (Broadway & Cambie) Vancouver.

JUN 17-19
Spirit Plant Medicine Conference - Roots of Light: Ancient Wisdom for a New Humanity. At UBC. Indigenous Leaders, Ethnobotanists, Shamans, Medical Researchers. www.spiritplantmedicine.com

JUN 25
Animal Messenger Workshops: Using Psychology & Intuition to heal the animals in your life! With Shiri Joshua, M.A. psychotherapist, author, speaker. Earlybird rate by June 11.10am-4pm, Vancouver. Info: www.soulacademy.ca

JUN 26
Charting a Course for the Future of Democratic Reform in BC: Fair Voting BC Annual General Meeting and Workshops, Sunday, June 26th, 1-5PM, webcast and live meetings (Vancouver, Victoria, Kamloops). Register at fvbcagm2011.eventbrite.com

JUN 27 & 28
Victoria June 27; Vancouver June 28: **Free lecture by Dr. Naomi Oreskes,** co-author of top science exposé Merchants of Doubt: Details www.pics.uvic.ca/events.php

JUL 15-17
Vancouver Folk Music Festival at Jericho Beach Park. Early bird tickets to June 11. Children under 12 free. Group discounts. Tickets 604-602-9798. www.thefestival.bc.ca Box office: 411 Dunsmuir Street, Vancouver.

JUL 15-17
Living the Good Life - A 3-day retreat on Bowen Island with renowned American Buddhist monk Lama Sumati Marut. Teachings on the real causes for happiness & practical tools for how to live the good life. Info: vancouverretreat.org

JUL 15-17
A Vedanta Weekend with Ramji (James Swartz) Author of "How to Attain Enlightenment." Salt Spring Island. Teaching by donation. www.meetup.com/ThisWakingSelf/events/17457818/

JUL 15-17
Introduction to Foot Reflexology commences Certificate Weekend Training Course. Introduction 7:30PM, $10; Course $395. Pacific Institute of Reflexology (604) 875-8818, www.pacificreflexology.com

AUG 11-13
Relax and Rejuvenate: Woodside Women's Wellness Retreat Weekend. Scenic Harrison Mills, $425.00, includes workshops, cruise, local food, accommodation. www.woodsidegallery.ca, 604-615-7770.

AUG 11, 12-14, & 20
Experience the Power of Soul Healing with Dr. & Master Zhi Gang Sha. Free Soul Healing evening Aug. 11. Introduction to Tao: Aug 12-14. Soul Healing Day Aug. 20. Info: 604-733-0853. Register www.Dr.Sha.com or call 888-339-6815.

AUG 26-28
Introduction to Foot Reflexology commences Certificate Weekend Training Course. Introduction 7:30PM, $10; Course $395. Pacific Institute of Reflexology (604) 875-8818, www.pacificreflexology.com

AUG 28-29
Open to all. For Pain and Stress Relief learn

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NST Insight Into Bowen by Tim Wilcox from the UK. Register: www.bowencollege.com 1-866-DoBowen.

SEPT 10

Adam Dreamhealer: Intention Heals Workshop in Vancouver Sept. 10. Experience Self-Empowerment as Adam orchestrates 2 group healings, introduces his new DVD "Heal Yourself." In Calgary June 5. All registration: www.dreamhealer.com

SEPT 29-OCT 2

American Monetary Institute Reform Conference, University Center, downtown Chicago. Dedicated to the independent study of monetary history, theory and reform. Info/registration at www.monetary.org or by phone 1-224-805-2200.

SUNDAYS

SOS (Science of Spirituality): See Resource Directory listing in Spiritual Practices for schedule in Richmond, Vancouver & Victoria. 604-277-1247. All Welcome. www.sos.org

Centre for Spiritual Living: Join us every Sunday @ 9:15 AM & 11 AM for practical spirituality with great music. Meditation: 10:15 AM. 1880 Triumph Street, Suite 8 (at Victoria Drive), Vancouver. Info: 604-321-1225, www.cslvancouver.com

TUESDAYS

Reflexology Student Clinic 6-10pm. One- hour sessions $20. By appointment only. Pacific Institute of Reflexology (604) 875-8818. www.pacificreflexology.com

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PARTNER WITH THE PREMIER health/Wellness Company in North America. Operate a mini office outlet. Great incentives, free training. www.futuredriven.info

HEALTH

WEIGHTED FITNESS APPAREL. Build stronger bones and muscles walking with NYK weight vest. Effective, stylish, comfortable. http://nyknyc.com. 1.845.688.7612. Local: maureenkane@shaw.ca

ROOMS FOR RENT

OFFICE FOR RENT NEAR CAMBIE AND 5TH Avenue. Great room for consultation, planning, coaching and therapy. Seminar Room Available for classes. 604-879-5600 ext 26.

OFFICE/CONSULTING/HEALING ROOM for rent in Natural Healing Centre near Broadway/Cambie Skytrain station. Very reasonable rent, full-time or part-time. Pacific Institute of Reflexology. (604) 875-8818.

SHAMANIC COACHING

DISCOVER WHAT YOUR CONSCIOUS MIND CANNOT UNCOVER: Trance drum journeys, Book of Life Readings, crystal & vibrational healing, karma releasing, Thought-form recapitulation. sonyaweir@uniserve.com www.eaglefireshamaniccoaching.com 778-227-2939

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DO YOU HAVE TOO MUCH STUFF? HGTV's exciting new show, CONSUMED, can help. We are looking for Vancouver area families that need help getting STUFF out of their lives for good. 604-873-9777 ext 251 or consumedtv@gmail or facebook.com/ConsumedTV

Quartete a Tete in concert Sat. June 11, St. James Hall, 3214 W. 10th Ave., Vancouver. Tickets $20. Info: 604-222-2299.

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• Stephen Gray—Returning to Sacred World *Van. author's Tools for Awakening* June 7

• Ellery Littleton Hummingbird Tatoo *Erotic Haiku* June 9

• Andy Karr—The Practice of Contemplative Photography June 14 *vancouver.shambhala.org*

• Monica McDowell You Are Light June 16

• Sara Stover The Way of the Happy Woman June 23

Full events info: banyen.com

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Leila Stuart, BA, LLB, RMT is a Yoga teacher and Registered Massage Therapist with over 35 years of yoga and teaching experience. Her 280 hr Anatomy of Yoga training explores the principles and practices that make yoga a healing process. She teaches functional anatomy, movement repatterning and yoga therapy to yoga teachers and serious students, all within the context of yoga philosophy and self-transformation.

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